Met Office

March 2008

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Mean temperatures generally close to average across the northern half of the UK, but slightly above average across the southern half of the UK. Rainfall generally above average and well above average across parts of East Anglia and SE England. Wettest March over England since 1981, wettest over Scotland and the UK since 1994 and 6th wettest in the series back to 1914 for Northern Ireland. Sunshine generally above average across most areas, but close to or slightly below average across SE England.

Wiggonholt (Sussex) recorded a maximum temperature of 15.8 °C on 5th. Braemar (Aberdeenshire) recorded a minimum temperature of -11.4 °C on 26th. 97.0 mm of rainfall was recorded at Glendessary (Inverness-shire) on 5th. An area of significant snowfall gave 5 to 10 cm across some eastern areas of England on Easter Sunday morning (23rd). A wind gust of 95 mph. was recorded at Needles Old Battery (Isle of Wight) on 10th.

England diary of highlights

Temperatures and sunshine generally slightly above average. Rainfall was well above average, particularly over parts of East Anglia and SE England.

1st to 2nd: The very unsettled and windy weather of late February continued into March as a deep area of low pressure brought gale force west or north-westerly winds on the 1st with outbreaks of rain or showers, some of these wintry across the Pennines. Winds then eased a little during the following day, but there were further outbreaks of rain or showers.

3rd to 9th: Winds briefly turned northerly later on the 3rd and during the 4th, bringing colder, but sunnier weather to many places. There were also showers, some of these wintry in the north and east. Pressure built strongly with many places having a cold, sunny day on the 5th after a widespread overnight frost. Benson (Oxfordshire) recorded a temperature of -8.1 °C on the 5th. Strong, but milder, westerly winds returned on the 6th bringing some spells of rain interspersed with sunshine and showers. Later on the 9th, heavy rain and severe gales spread to parts of the west.

10th to 16th: Many places had severe gales and heavy rain on the 10th, with the south-west of England especially taking the brunt of this storm. There were gusts of wind in excess of 70 m.p.h. and some of the rain and showers were accompanied by thunder. After a brief lull, severe gales were renewed on the night of the 11th and 12th with northern England catching the worst, though some very squally winds were noted further south. Berry Head (Devon) recorded a gust of 82 m.p.h. on the 10th and Crosby (Merseyside) recorded a gust of 75 m.p.h. on the 12th. Thereafter, it became much less windy and there were frosts across parts of northern England on some nights. However, heavy rain spread north-eastwards during the 15th, and lasted into the 16th, the heaviest of the rain across central and southern England where there were 30 to 50 mm of rain in some localities. Temperatures reached 15.8 °C at Wiggonholt (Sussex) on 15th.

17th to 24th: Any remaining rain across southern England cleared southwards with much colder northerly winds spreading southwards. However, there was plenty of sunshine by day, but clear skies overnight allowed for some sharp frosts. There were showers of sleet or snow near some North Sea coasts. After a brief milder spell on the 20th and 21st, accompanied by strong winds and rain, much colder and very strong northerly winds spread southwards for the Easter Weekend. For many the Easter Weekend was one of the wintriest

weekends of the entire winter with many places seeing snow with an area of significant snowfall giving 5 to 10 cm across some eastern areas on Easter Sunday morning. Following a sharp night frost, Easter Monday was generally fine with some sunshine, though north-west England became cloudy and damp later.

25th to 31st: After a cold start, the weather gradually became milder during this time as northerly winds were replaced by westerly winds. However, it became much more unsettled and at times very windy with outbreaks of rain. There was heavy rain in many places on the 28th and 29th and on the latter day, gale force winds affected some south-western areas with gusts of 50 to 60 m.p.h. The final days of the month were quieter with sunshine and scattered heavy showers.

Wales diary of highlights

Temperatures and sunshine generally slightly above average, with well above average rainfall.

1st to 2nd: It continued unsettled at the start of March as a deep area of low pressure brought gale force west or north-westerly winds, cloud and rain on the 1st. Sunshine and showers followed for the 2nd.

3rd to 9th: This period started cold with northerly winds on the 3rd and 4th. There were reports of some snowfall across parts of western Wales. Pressure built across Wales during the 5th, but not before a very cold night everywhere, with Alwen (Conwy) recording a temperature of -4.9°C on the 5th. A strong but milder westerly flow returned on the 6th, bringing spells of rain, but interspersed with sunshine and showers. There was a drier interlude, but then heavy rainfall and gale force winds spread from the northwest on the 9th, followed by sunshine and wintry showers later.

10th to 16th: A very windy start with severe gales across the whole of Wales, with Mumbles Head (near Swansea) recording a gust of 82 m.p.h. on the 10th. The winds were quite blustery, especially near the quite heavy and frequent showers. A brief lull followed, but then further severe gales arrived on the 11th/12th, this time north Wales most affected, with Capel Curig (Conwy) recording a gust of 91 m.p.h. Again, the showers were quite heavy and frequent. Prestatyn (Denbighshire) recorded a temperature of 14.1 °C on the 11th. It was much quieter during the 13 and 14th, with just a little rain in the south for a time, but then heavy rain returned during the 15th and the 16th, giving as much as 30 to 50 mm locally.

17th to 23rd: Mostly dry and sunny on the 17th. Cold but mostly dry on the 18th, just the odd shower near the far north-west. Dry and cold again on the 19th, but cloud and mostly light rain moved south-eastwards across Wales on the 20th. Windy and showery on the 21st, the showers turning increasingly heavy and thundery in the north. Very cold on the 22nd and into the 23rd, ahead of cloud and rain moving south-eastwards once again.

24th to 31st: Cold and cloudy with snow over most of Wales on the 24th, mostly light though. This moved away during the morning, but was followed by wintry showers of sleet and snow in the afternoon. There was more rain and sleet across north Wales on the 25th, with just rain in the south. Rain moved eastwards on the morning of the 26th, followed by sunshine and scattered showers. A mostly dry and fine day on the 27th with some warm sunshine, but then another wet day on the 28th. The final days of the month were drier and brighter but with a few sharp showers, some of these thundery in the north. Betws-Y-Coed (Conwy) recorded a temperature of 15.3 °C on the 31st.

Scotland diary of highlights

Temperatures close to average, but with above average rainfall and sunshine.

1st to 4th: The month came in like a lion as severe gales brought gusts of 71 m.p.h. at Rosehearty (Aberdeenshire) in the early hours. The 2nd to the 4th was cold with sunshine and snow showers. These were heavy at times, and on the 3rd brought 15 cm of lying snow to Carluke (South Lanarkshire). Nearby, Salsburgh

(North Lanarkshire) failed to rise above freezing point all day. Frost became severe at night with Loch Glascarnoch (Highlands) recording a temperature of -8.1 °C on the 5th.

5th to 10th: Rain was heavy in the northwest on the 5th, with Achfary (Highlands) recording a 24-hour total of 57.7 mm. The 6th saw some rain in the west. Sunshine and showers followed on the 7th with isolated thunderstorms over Argyll and the Northwest Highlands. Heavy rain moved south-east during the morning of the 8th with brighter, showery weather following. Showers continued across the west on the 9th. Temperatures in this period were typically 10 to 13 °C. Rain, hill snow and easterly gales edged northwards on the morning of the 10th. A colder day, with a maximum temperature of only 4 °C in Glasgow.

11th to 16th: This period saw either showers or longer spells of rain with most of the rain across the south. There was also some hill snow, especially in the north. Daytime temperatures reached typically 6 to 10 °C with mostly frost-free nights.

17th to 20th: The 17th to 19th saw some wintry showers in the north-east with most other parts dry. Rain early on the 20th brought over 20 mm to parts of Argyll and the West Highlands. Meanwhile, Auchtermuchty, Rossie (Fife) had a pleasant day with temperatures reaching 15.2 °C. A windy day with a gust of 68 m.p.h. at Port Ellen (Islay).

21st to 27th: The 21st to the 26th were cold with wintry showers, and even some longer spells of sleet or snow in the south on the evening of the 22nd. Lerwick recorded a gust of 72 m.p.h. on the 21st and Balmoral (Aberdeenshire) recorded 15 cm of snow on 25th. A sharp frost developed in the north overnight on the 25th with temperatures of -11.4 °C at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) and -11.1 °C at Altnaharra (Highlands). Rain and hill snow spread north later on the 26th, clearing to a sunny day on the 27th.

28th to 31st: Rain and hill snow spread north-eastwards during the morning of the 28th, this becoming confined to Shetland later. A windy day with a gust of 64 m.p.h. reported at Tiree. Showers on the 29th fell as snow on hills. Rain and strong winds spread northwards later. Showers followed on the 30th but with the south becoming drier later. March then almost went out like a lamb except for some heavy rain or showers which moved in from the west during the evening of the 31st.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Temperatures close to average, but with above average rainfall and sunshine.

1st to 4th: The month started dry and bright but it soon become cloudy, with light rain in the afternoon of the 1st. Severe gales affected the north and east at first, with a gust of 67 m.p.h. at Orlock Head (County Down). Much colder from the 2nd to the 4th, with sunshine and wintry showers, and on the 3rd there were some snowfalls in places, with Belfast Aldergrove reaching just 5 °C. By the 4th, snow became confined to the hills.

5th to 10th: The 5th and 6th were mainly cloudy with some rain and drizzle and it was milder with temperatures around 11 or 12 °C in most areas. On the 7th, sunshine and showers, these heavy at times and locally thundery in the west. The 8th got off to a wet start, but became drier and brighter during the morning. Frequent showers followed in the afternoon and it was generally chilly and quite windy. The 9th was a rather cloudy day with scattered showers and temperatures on the cold side. Trassey Slievenaman (County Down) recorded 41.1 mm on the 9th. The 10th was brighter with showers.

11th to 16th: A band of rain moved across the country during the morning of the 11th, followed by sunny intervals and occasional showers. A windy day on the 12th with a gust of 66 m.p.h. at Killowen (County Down) and blustery showers. The 13th brought a mixture of sunshine and showers, some heavy. On the 14th, showers along the north coast died out, and then rain slowly spread northwards during the second half of the afternoon and evening, becoming heavy in many places and this rain continued through the 15th. The rain cleared southwards during the morning of the 16th and it then brightened up with clear spells following through the evening.

17th to 23rd: A generally bright period of weather with a mixture of sunny spells and scattered showers. Aldergrove recorded more than 10 hours of sun on the 17th but there were some sharp frosts at night. Katesbridge (County Down) recorded a temperature of -6.6 °C on the 18th. The 20th was cloudier with some mainly light rain and drizzle. Temperatures started on the mild side but it become colder from the 21st, with temperatures near 7 °C by day. It was also windy, Orlock Head recording a gust of 66 m.p.h. on the 21st.

24th to 27th: The 24th started cloudy with a little rain and sleet but it turned brighter during the day with a scattering of light showers. The 25th started bright with some showers but clouded over with rain later. A cold couple of days with temperatures generally around 7 °C. The rain cleared eastwards through the morning of the 26th to leave a mixture of sunshine and heavy showers, some thundery. A chilly start to the 27th with a widespread frost, but a bright or sunny morning followed. Cloud thickened up during the afternoon, with rain during the evening.

28th to 31st: The 28th to the 30th were bright with showers, these turning heavy and thundery at times. These produced 25 mm of rain at St Angelo (County Fermanagh) on the 29th. The final day of the month brought some fine weather with only one or two early morning showers, although the evening turned cloudy with occasional rain and a strengthening southerly wind. Helens Bay recorded a temperature of 14.0 °C on the 30th.

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